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REMARKS

Claims 1-10 and 32-35 are pending in this Application. By this Amendment, Claims 1, 6, 33 and 34 have been added, Claims 32 and 35 have been canceled, and Claim 36 has been added. As a result, Claims 1-10, 33,34 and 36 are at issue in this Application.

Examiner Interview

Applicant thanks the Examiner for taking time to conduct a telephone interview on Wednesday, December 29, 2004. During the interview, the Examiner and Applicant's counsel discussed U.S. Patent Nos. 4,553,353 to Simpson and 5,165,737 to Riegelman, the disclosed invention, and the distinctions there between. Minor edits to independent Claims 1, 6, 33 and 34 were discussed and agreement was reached regarding the patentable subject matter of the invention. Also, Applicant's counsel explained that neither Simpson '353 nor Riegelman disclose the structure required by dependent Claims 3 and 8. Further, the parties discussed a proposed independent claim that was added as Claim 36. The claim amendments herein are consistent with the matters discussed during the interview and are supported by the disclosure.

Section 103 Rejections

As discussed during the interview, independent Claim 1 has been amended and is not rendered obvious by Simpson '353. Therefore, Claim 1 and dependent Claims 2-5 are patentably distinct and allowable.

Similarly, independent Claim 6 has been amended and is not rendered obvious by the combination of Simpson '353 and Riegelman. Accordingly, Claim 6 and dependent Claims 7-10 are in condition for allowance.

Independent Claims 33 and 34 have been amended consistent with the interview and neither are rendered obvious by the combination of Simpson '353 and Riegelman. Thus, Claims 33 and 34 are patentably distinct and allowable.

Added Claim

Per the interview discussions, Applicant has added independent Claim 36. Applicant submits that Claim 36 is not rendered obvious by the art of record and is allowable.

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CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing, Applicant believes the Application is in a condition for allowance, and respectfully requests early notice of the same. Applicant requests that the Examiner call the undersigned attorney if the Examiner has any questions concerning this Reply, or if it will expedite the progress of this Application.

Respectfully submitted,

Dated: January 6, 2005

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CERTIFICATE OF FACSIMILE TRANSMISSION

I hereby certify that this document is being facsimile transmitted to the Patent and Trademark Office, to the attention of Examiner Gregory J. Strimbu, Art Unit No. 3634, to Fax No. 703/872-9306

on January 6, 2005

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